'Good Works' donations benefit many local groups

Pledging to be a good corporate citizen in Wharton, Wal-Mart is making a big splash at its grand opening by contributing $24,000 to community organizations and causes through Wal-Mart's Good Works community involvement program.

In celebration of the grand opening, store associates will present checks to the 100 Club of Wharton County, Boys and Girls Club of Wharton – After-School Reading Program, Boy Scouts Troop 326, Cub Scouts Pack 3303, East Bernard Elementary School, - Matagorda County United Way, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System, Morning Glory Ranch Outdoor SVC & Equine Therapy, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church Community Assistance Program, Rotary Club of Wharton, St. John's Lutheran Church Community Assistance Program, St. Paul Lutheran Church 2004, Wharton Independent School District, Wharton Police Association, Wharton Volunteer Fire Department, and Whites International Scholarship.

"We at Morning Glory Ranch Outdoor Education and Equine Therapy Facility are so grateful for Wal-Mart's support and grant donation to our organization," said Kim Mack, president, Morning Glory Ranch.

"Our facility provides physical, behavioral and emotional therapy using equine assisted activities. This grant will assist us in providing low cost therapy programs to those who would not otherwise be able to experience this type of therapy."

"We are excited to have the opportunity to help Morning Glory Ranch as well as several other wonderful organizations in Wharton," said Dean Madden, store manager. "This is a

Wal-Mart opens Wednesday

After ribbon is cut, store ready for 24-hour shopping

The new Wal-Mart Supercenter in Wharton opens Wednesday, and shoppers are likely to line up early.

The 7:30 a.m. grand opening ceremony will feature members of the Wharton High School choir performing the national anthem, comments by Wharton County Commissioner Mickey Reynolds, Wharton High School ROTC color guard and a performance by members of the Wharton High School band. Special activities during grand opening day include vendor demonstrations, giveaways and costumed characters.

Located at the intersection of U.S. 59 and FM 102, the new 155,000-square-foot Wal-Mart Supercenter is designed as a one-stop family shopping center, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The store features a full line of groceries including bakery goods, deli foods, frozen foods, meat and dairy products and fresh produce. In addition, it will also feature a Tire & Lube Express, vision center, portrait studio, one-hour photo center, pharmacy, hair salon, snack bar and Murphy USA gas station.

The store will employ about 350 "associates," and over 300 of them were hired locally, according to Supercenter manager Dean Madden.

More than 4,000 people applied for the jobs, according to Madden. "We were thrilled with the large pool of applicants we had for our jobs. It makes me proud to work for this company where there truly are unlimited opportunities."

Wal-Mart has a commitment to promoting associates from within the company to become store managers, according to Madden. Madden started as an hourly associate 13 years ago at a store in Texas.

In fact, about two-thirds of all Wal-Mart managers started as hourly associates.

Some of the Wharton store's associates have worked for Wal-Mart for many years, though, Madden said. They bring with them to the new store their experience in serving customers. Specifically, 25 associates have been with Wal-Mart five or more years, bringing more than 125 years of experience in meeting the needs of the community.

They'll also benefit the community in many private ways, he said.

"Our associates are already active members of the community and support many good causes," he said.

"We look forward to making an even greater impact in the future."

Wal-Mart operates 102 Wal-Mart discount stores, 180 Supercenters, 26 Wal-Mart Neighborhood Markets and 69 Sam's Clubs in Texas and employs more than 128,351 associates in the state.

Wal-Mart opened its first Texas store in 1975. In the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2002, Wal-Mart collected and paid $977 million in Texas sales taxes and paid $147 million in state and local taxes.

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